



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COUNTY HEADS MULTI-AGENCY PLAN TO COMBAT MOSQUITO INFESTATION ***Buena Vista Lagoon Targeted for County's First Aerial Application of Larvicide in 30 Years***

Federal, state, county and city agencies joined forces today in a pro-active, strategic attack on mosquitoes in the North County's Buena Vista Lagoon. The multi-agency plan involved aerial application of mosquito larvicide in otherwise hard to reach areas of the lagoon.

Known to be a major mosquito-breeding site, the marshy areas of the lagoon are ideal for harboring many species of mosquitoes, including those capable of transmitting West Nile Virus. This plan was developed by the Vector Surveillance & Control Program of the County's Department of Environmental Health in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Fish & Wildlife, the California State Department of Fish & Game, and the cities of Carlsbad and Oceanside.

"We must do all that we can to minimize the risks from West Nile Virus by reducing the mosquito population in San Diego County," said Board of Supervisors Chairman Greg Cox. "The West Nile Virus is a real threat to this region. We intend to take every measure to reduce its impact and educate the public."

Today, granules containing *Bacillus sphaericus*, a naturally occurring bacterium registered by the Environmental Protection Agency for mosquito control, were spread by helicopter. This method of application provided "pin point accuracy" in difficult-to-access areas of the lagoon. Designed to dissolve in water, the larvicide kills the developing mosquito larvae. *Bacillus sphaericus* is not toxic to humans and does not pose risks to wildlife, non-target species, or the environment, when used according to label directions.

The purpose of the aerial application was to reduce the risk of exposure to mosquito-borne encephalitis viruses, including West Nile Virus, when and if the disease reaches the San Diego region. Last year, 44 states reported a total of more than 4000 human cases of West Nile Virus illness. To date, no human or animal cases of the disease have been reported in San Diego County.

To avoid being bitten by mosquitoes, residents are encouraged to wear long sleeves and pants when outdoors, especially at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active. Check your property for standing water and clean out wheelbarrows, buckets, birdbaths, old tires and rain gutters to prevent mosquito breeding. For more tips on protecting your home and family, visit the County's official West Nile virus website at www.SDFightTheBite.com or call toll-free 888.551.INFO.

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